Massachusetts Department of Transportation

Advisory Group Charter

Cape Cod Bridges Program

March 2023

massDOT
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Highway Division

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1 Introduction

The Cape Cod Bridges Program will include the replacement of the Bourne and Sagamore bridges, provide new connections to the local roadway network and improve multimodal accommodations within the Cape Cod Canal area. As described in the Program's Public Involvement Plan (PIP), an Advisory Group comprised of local interests and representation, will be convened to provide feedback and share information with the Program team throughout Program development. This document serves to define the purpose and role of the Advisory Group, outline the specific goals of the group, identify membership and expectations, and discuss the Advisory Group meeting guidelines. Please note that this document may be updated throughout the Program to reflect schedule changes, Program scope and delivery milestones, and information gathered through the public process.

2 Purpose

The Cape Cod Bridges Program is a regional effort that builds upon the MassDOT's Cape Cod Canal Transportation Study, which identified existing and future multi-modal transportation deficiencies and needs around the Cape Cod Canal area, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Major Rehabilitation Evaluation (MRE) Study, which looked at the feasibility of maintaining or replacing both the Bourne and Sagamore bridges.

Both studies underwent a comprehensive public process to solicit feedback that would inform their respective final reports and recommendations. The purpose of this Advisory Group is to provide a focused forum for stakeholder groups and organizations to communicate with the Program team. The group will allow for increased engagement with key stakeholders within the Program area and for the Program team to learn of community feedback, needs and concerns in a focused setting; it will not be a decision-making body.

The Program team will rely on member organizations to disseminate information, collect feedback, evaluate community needs and concerns, and assess Program level of support. The information collected through the Advisory Group will help the Program team make well informed decisions. This will help to foster a collaborative relationship between stakeholders, the public, and the Program team throughout the design process.

3 Goals

The goals of this Advisory Group are as follows:

1. Establish a group that represents of wide range of interests in and around the Cape Cod Canal region that can serve to communicate Program updates with their community constituencies
2. Provide an organized, respectful, and accessible discussion-based setting for member organizations to communicate and collaborate with each other and members of the Program team
3. Provide ample and meaningful opportunities for Advisory Group member organizations to participate in discussions, provide feedback, and ask questions
4. Utilize information collected through the Advisory Group to make informed Program decisions based on local and regional needs

4 Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of an Advisory Group member organization are as follows:

1. Represent their specific group or organizations' interests, not their individual interests
2. Establish one point of contact with the Program team for all Advisory Group communications
3. Send one representative to attend and participate in all Advisory Group meetings on behalf of their organization,(this may include reading and interacting with Advisory Group materials prior to a scheduled meeting)
4. Distribute Program information to their organization or constituency as requested by the Program team
5. Collect feedback from their organization or constituency and share with the Program team
6. Adhere to all Advisory Group meeting ground rules (outlined below) to create a respectful and productive meeting environment

5 Membership

The organizations invited to participate in the Advisory Group are provided in Attachment A. Please note this list may be updated throughout Program development.

5.1 Terms of Membership

To participate in this Advisory Group, all members must agree to the following terms:

1. This Advisory Group is not a decision-making body. Feedback will be considered to the maximum extent practicable but will not dictate decisions made by the Program team.
2. Each member organization will be allotted one representative to be an active participant at every Advisory Group meeting.
    a. There is a benefit to consistency, therefore, all organizations are encouraged to send the same representative to each Advisory Group meeting.
    b. All other interested parties may attend and participate in Advisory Group meetings as members of the audience.
3. One specific point of contact will be established with each member organization for all Advisory Group communications, including meeting invites. This point of contact may or may not be the organization's representative participating at meetings.
    a. If a member organization would like to appoint a new primary point of contact, they should notify Gareth Saunders, MassDOT Legislative Liaison, at gareth.saunders@dot.state.ma.us.
4. Member organizations are asked to participate in this Advisory Group for a minimum of two years.[1]
5. Each member organization should make every effort to send a representative to attend and participate in every Advisory Group meeting.
6. At any point in the Program process, MassDOT may choose to invite additional organizations or individuals to serve on the Advisory Group.

[1] The Program team recognizes that this Program will extend beyond two years and the need for an Advisory Group will be consistent throughout the duration of the Program. At the end of the first two years, the Program team will re-evaluate group membership to ensure that all community interests continue to be represented.

6 Advisory Group Meetings Guidelines

6.1 Schedule

The Advisory Group will meet at least 3 times per year throughout Program development. Advisory Group meetings will be scheduled prior to public meetings at key Program milestones.

6.2 Operations

An agenda will be shared with all meeting participants at the beginning of each meeting and in advance when possible. Each meeting may be structured differently depending on the topics being covered, information available, and goals of the meeting. Meetings may include formal presentations, "break out rooms" or small group discussions, interactive mapping, surveys, polling, large group discussions, and Q&A.

Specific information on how and when to participate will depend on the location and/or virtual platform and will be shared with all participants at the beginning of each meeting. A moderator will be present at each meeting to facilitate groups discussions.

6.3 Ground Rules

The Advisory Group ground rules are as follows:

1. All Advisory Group meetings will be open to members of the public to listen and observe. Public Q&A may take place after Advisory Group discussions as time allows.
2. All comments and questions shared at Advisory Group meetings will be documented as part of the Program record.
3. Participants should limit discussion to the topics and items being covered on each meeting's agenda.
4. Participants are asked to listen to others and be respectful of all opinions expressed to support productive and constructive discussions.
5. Participants are asked to be mindful of time and limit their comments to allow all interested representatives the opportunity to participate.
6. Program team members may redirect conversation if appropriate.
7. Advisory Group meetings may be held virtually, in-person, or a hybrid. The location of the meeting will be provided on each meeting invite, which will be sent to organization's point of contact at least three (3) weeks in advance of each meeting.
    a. All virtual Advisory Group meetings will be recorded. All Advisory Group participants will be permitted to enable their camera and mute and unmute themselves throughout the meeting. Meeting staff may mute or ask individuals to turn their cameras off it becomes distracting.
    b. All in-person Advisory Group meetings will be held in accessible locations within the Cape Cod Canal region.
8. Advisory Group member organizations will have opportunity to provide feedback, comment, and ask questions outside of the formal Advisory Group meetings by submitting comments and questions through the Program's online comment form, attending public meetings, and participating in individual stakeholder briefings hosted by the Program team.

6.4 Meeting Communications

6.4.1 Before the Meeting

Invitations to all Advisory Group meetings will be sent to the established points of contact at least three (3) weeks in advance of the meeting. All invitations will include a date, time, and location (in-person, virtual, or both). Meeting registration instructions will be provided in the invites. A meeting reminder will be sent at least one (1) week in advance of the meeting.

Meeting invites may also include materials that will be discussed during the meeting. These materials will provide Advisory Group participants the opportunity to review and become acquainted with the topics and information being covered to facilitate productive discussion at the meeting.

6.4.2 During the Meeting

At the beginning of each meeting, the Program team will share how and when Advisory Group representatives may participate during the meeting. Meeting participants may be asked to hold their comments and questions until the end of the presentation.

6.4.3 After the Meeting

Meeting notes will be taken at each meeting and will be made available in an accessible format on the Program website following the meeting. PowerPoints and other presentation materials will also be posted to the website in a fully accessible format. In additional to these materials being posted to the site, the Program team may provide an update on Advisory Group activities at the beginning of public information meetings.

Advisory Group points of contacts should reach out to Gareth Saunders, Legislative Liaison, at gareth.saunders@dot.state.ma.us with any specific questions related to the Advisory Group. General comments or questions on the Program are being collected and responded to through the Program's comment form hosted on the Program's website page.

7 Outcomes

As stated, this Advisory Group is not a decision-making body. However, feedback collected through the Advisory Group will be used to inform the design and outreach process. Other quantitative (number of meetings, attendees, and comments) and qualitative (nature of comments, feedback, questions, and responses) information collected will be documented as part of the Program record and utilized to guide and adapt the public outreach approach as necessary.

Cape Cod Bridges Program

Advisory Group Membership Form

I, _____, on behalf of _____, have read this Charter and understand the purpose, goals, and expectations of this Advisory Group. By signing this document, I agree to the roles and responsibilities and terms of membership described herein.

_____

Stakeholder Signature

Carrie Lavallee

Carrie Lavallee, P.E., Chief Engineer